# *Toward a Renewed Ethic of Jewish Philanthropy*

EDITED BY

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# 3

# American Jewish Philanthropy, Direct Giving, and the Unity of the Jewish Community*

***Chaim I. Waxman***

## AMERICAN JEWISH PHILANTHROPY

During the early twentieth century, American Jewish philanthropy was organized and the Federation movement emerged. The concept of a Jewish Federation in the United States, or a Jewish community chest, dates back to 1895, when the Federated Jewish Charities of Boston was organized.[1] The original idea of Federation was to make fundraising more efficient. With the masses of new immigrants, a variety of social and educational agencies had emerged. These developments paralleled those in the larger society when, in the second half of the

*Sincerest appreciation to Adam Ferziger, Kimmy Caplan, Yehuda Galinsky, Yossi Prager, and Jack Ukeles, for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

nineteenth century, many private social welfare agencies had sprung up across the country and attempts to organize them led to the formation of the Charity Organization Society (COS). Though not directly related, the American COS was modeled after the London COS, which was organized in 1870 for the express goal of coordinating the efforts of and designing guidelines for London's numerous charitable organizations.[2]

At the turn of the century, it became increasingly apparent that the traditional patterns of fundraising within the Jewish community, namely, with each agency raising its own funds independently, was wasteful and self-defeating. The joint fundraising campaign of the Boston Federation proved to be so successful that other Jewish communities soon followed suit. In 1900 a National Conference on Organized Jewish Charities was held, and representatives from thirty-six cities attended. By 1917, there were forty-seven Federations in the larger American cities. The Federation concept was also adopted by many general, non-Jewish social welfare agencies, and Federation became the model for community chests and councils of social agencies in cities and towns across the country.[3] Increasingly Jewish philanthropy came to reflect to what Charles Liebman defined as the ambivalence of America's Jews, that is, the value of group survival, on the one hand, and liberal American values on the other.[4] Even if these values are not mutually exclusive, there is, at best, a very tense relationship between them.

## American Jews and Israel

Allon Gal has analyzed how American Zionism and American Jewish philanthropy to Israel attempted to mold the Yishuv and the State of Israel in their image.[5] The major way American Jews expressed, then and currently, their pro-Israel and Zionist proclivities, which are reflections of the value of group survival, is through philanthropy.

How did the organized American Jewish philanthropic efforts develop? The structural unity of the second generation of Eastern European Jews in the United States (1925–1945) was reinforced by the serious rise of threats and actions against Jews in foreign lands, especially in Europe with the rise of Nazism, and in Palestine, with the rise

of Arab nationalism and anti-Jewish massacres. The two major American Jewish overseas aid organizations, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the United Palestine Appeal (UPA), founded by the Zionists in October 1925,[6] recognized that competing for contributors was inefficient, but the ideological differences between them—especially about whether helping Jews in their own countries was preferable to encouraging them to go to Palestine—precluded any united fundraising campaign. The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF, or CJF for short) had a special reason for wishing that the two overseas aid agencies should come to some agreement, since it ran the fundraising campaigns in the local communities. After several years of negotiations, the Council of Jewish Federations worked out a formula with the JDC and UPA, and the two overseas aid agencies became the major partners of a new body, founded in 1939, the United Jewish Appeal (UJA).[7] For several years the United Jewish Appeal itself remained rather unstable, and its relationship with the Council of Jewish Federations was precarious at best. This initial effort at cooperation established a pattern that spread during the period of the third generation, namely, the increasing coordination of fundraising activities between the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Jewish Appeal in Jewish communities throughout the country. As a result of these efforts, not only was fundraising streamlined and more dollars raised; the joint campaigns have resulted in the rise of the Council of Jewish Federations to a position of dominance in domestic Jewish communal affairs. Concurrently the United Jewish Appeal became the major fundraising agency involved in overseas aid, and the United Palestine Appeal, subsequently renamed the United Israel Appeal, became the major power bloc within the UJA.

The watershed of American Jewish giving to Israel was probably 1967. As it has been described by many, the Six-Day War affected American Jews in ways which were previously unpredictable. As Naomi Cohen described it, synagogues and other Jewish organizations

> called a moratorium on their usual money-raising drives and all concentrated on the Israel Emergency Fund run by the United Jewish Appeal. Many communities launched

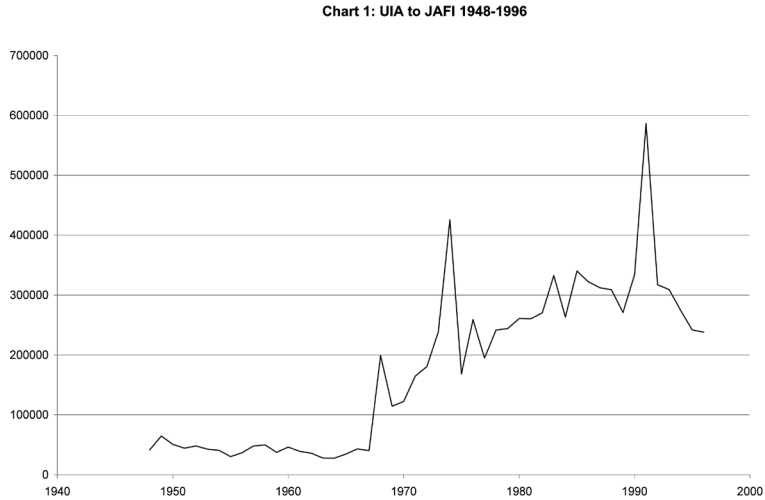
> their own campaigns even before they were approached. Illustrations abound on the magnitude and even sacrificial elements of the campaign. The results amazed the professional fund-raisers and caused a log-jam in tabulating the receipts. By the end of the war, i.e., less than a month's time, over $100,000,000 was raised, and the figure climbed to $180,000,000 before the campaign was closed.[8]

Similarly, when the October 1973 war broke out, America's Jews responded unprecedentedly. One headline proclaimed, "$100,000,000 in Five Days," and the story went on to detail the efforts of the UJA, CJFWF, and Israel Bonds Organization to raise $100,000,000 within the next five days. Just two days later, the Israel Bonds Organization announced that it had sold the record-breaking sum of more than $20 million in State of Israel Bonds to more than 600 New York business, civic, and Jewish religious and communal leaders, and a month later, Max Fisher, the chairman of Jewish Agency Board of Governors, honorary general chairman of the UJA, and chairman of the United Israel Appeal, confidently announced that the 1967 campaign figure would be surpassed three and one-half times by the current campaign.[9]

American Jews again rallied to support Israel during and after the Second Lebanon War of last summer, as will soon be indicated, but the change in American Jewish philanthropic patterns was already obvious by the end of the 1990s. It began to change, not as a result of the Begin-Likud election victory of 1977, the 1982 war in Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacres, the Pollard spy case, nor as the result of any other Israeli actions, as some assert,[10] but earlier, and as the result of domestic American processes. Data show that donations from the UJA to the Jewish Agency, calculated in 1982–1984 dollars, rose in 1967 from about $110 million to about $580 million, and the peak was reached in 1973, when they reached $870 million. Since then, such donations have declined considerably and in 1994 were only slightly higher than at the beginning of 1967.

A more careful look at contemporary American Jewish patterns of philanthropy presents a somewhat different picture. Data on UJA

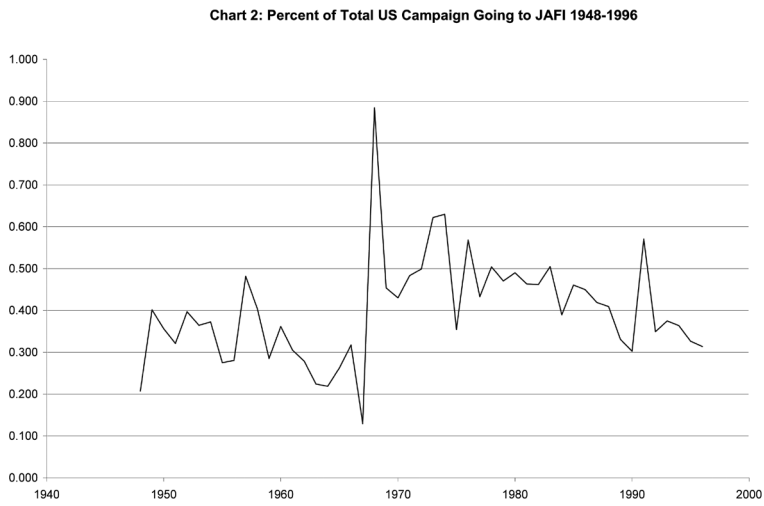
campaigns indicate that the amount of the total campaigns going to the Jewish Agency rose significantly during crises, such as the Six-Day War of June 1967, the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, and the significantly increased needs due to the dramatic immigration of Ethiopian and Soviet Jews of 1991. However, the amounts have declined steadily since then (see Chart 1).




Source: Data supplied by Prof. Sergio DellaPergola and originally obtained from UIA and Jewish Agency

The reality of this is much starker, because the patterns indicated in Chart 1 are based on unadjusted dollars and do not reflect the effect of inflation. The picture is much clearer when we look at the percentage of the total campaign that went to the Jewish Agency (Chart 2).

It is clear here that the Jewish Agency for Israel received less than 5 percent from the United Israel Appeal between 1948 and 1967; that the amount it received rose to almost 9 percent in 1968; and has been on an unsteady decline since 1967.[11] What is not so clear is whether there has been any real decline in the amount of money contributed by American Jews to Israel since 1967.[12] It might be suggested that America's Jews have been steadily moving from philanthropy to large, organized campaigns to more selective, guided giving to spe-




Source: Data supplied by Prof. Sergio DellaPergola and originally obtained from UIA and Jewish Agency

cific institutions and other charitable causes in Israel. Indeed, there have been several efforts aimed at generating precisely this type of charitable giving.[13] However, although there probably has not been a decrease in the overall amount of money contributed by American Jews to Israel, there are indications that there has been a real decrease in the number of American Jews contributing to Israel and, indeed, to any Jewish cause.

As both Jack Wertheimer[14] and Gary Tobin[15] found, Jewish philanthropists are becoming more universalist and are increasingly likely to make their largest gifts to non-Jewish philanthropies. This becomes even more significant when we see that more money is being given by fewer Jews. This was also a major conclusion of a study of the Jewish community of Phoenix, where it was found that there was a significant decline in the percentage of households that contributed to the Jewish Federation as well as an overall decline in donations to it between 1982 and 2002, and a significantly greater number of respondents reported contributing to general rather than Jewish causes. Perhaps even more surprising, it was also found that those younger than 35 are least likely to donate to any charitable cause, with only

56 percent making a donation of any kind, and that younger Jews are more likely to donate to non-Jewish rather than Jewish causes.[16]

Jews give much less to religious causes than do other Americans. Jews are less likely to belong to a synagogue than Christians are to belong to a church, and also less likely to contribute to a synagogue than Christians are to a church. Jews are also much less likely to contribute to national religious organizations than are Christians.[17] For example, in the "Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey" of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, 34 percent of the Christians surveyed said that they were not members of a church, whereas 46 percent of the Jews surveyed said that they were not members of a synagogue; 27 percent of the Christians said that they did not contribute anything to any nonreligious charity, and 20 percent said they did not contribute anything to any religious cause, whereas 14 percent of the Jews said that they not contribute anything to any nonreligious charity, and 25 percent said they did not contribute anything to any religious cause.[18]

Although Jews differ from Christians in their giving patterns with respect to religious institutions, Jewish philanthropy has been Americanized in the sense that Jews, like other Americans, are selective in the charitable causes that they support. They typically opt for philanthropies with which they have some attachment, either emotional or personal.

As with United Way and other general community fundraising ventures, Jewish giving to umbrella charities such as the United Jewish Communities campaigns has declined. Sometimes it is replaced by targeted-giving ventures. In some ways, direct giving has led to positive philanthropic innovations. By not giving to existing or communal institutions which may be, at best, superfluous, some direct-giving ventures have made Jewish philanthropy more efficient. But direct giving has also probably contributed to the decline in the rate of givers, even when the overall sums contributed do not decline, due to the increased sums given by direct givers. In other words, a greater amount is given by a smaller number of people. Contemporary American Jewish patterns of philanthropy increasingly conform to the pattern of the decreasing ethnicity of America's Jews.

There have been shifts in the patterns of American Jewish philanthropy, and part of the shift is related to broader patterns in American society. In 2000, Robert Putnam presented a broad array of data indicating that the social "glue" connecting Americans had weakened.[19] His data showed declining rates of voting, union membership, membership in parent-teacher associations, and a host of other voluntary organizations.

Shortly after the al-Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, Putnam suggested that the traumatic event might have reversed the pattern he previously portrayed.[20] He pointed to the remarkable manifestations of involvement, communalism, and self-sacrifice immediately after the disaster. He was impressed, and he expressed the hope that the effect would be a real and lasting one rather than a short-lived blip. However, evidence indicates that the overall pattern did not change substantially as a result of 9/11. An analysis comparing data from the 2004 and 1985 General Social Survey (GSS) found that Americans say that they have fewer close friends today than they said two decades ago; that the number who say they have no one with whom to discuss important matters has tripled; that there was a decrease by about one-third in the average social network size; and that there was a significant decrease in non-kin ties and fewer neighborhood and voluntary association ties.[21]

As for America's Jews, the data indicate that they are not different and their engagement in their civic activities have also weakened. Their rate of volunteering for communal endeavors has declined, and they now join Jewish organizations at considerably lower rates than they did previously. Moreover, and most revealing with respect to the specific issue of collective identity, the 2000/2001 National Jewish Population Survey found not only that the major Jewish membership organizations in the United States had suffered a nearly 20 percent decline in affiliation over the decade of the 1990s alone, but it also found that younger American Jews are less likely than their elders to strongly agree that "Jews in the United States and Jews around the world share a common destiny." They are also less likely to strongly agree that "When people are in distress American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews," and they are less likely

to strongly agree that "I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world." They also manifest declining rates of ethno-religious homogamy, specifically Jewish in-group marriages; declining rates of Jewish neighborhood concentration—increasingly Jews reside in ethnically and religiously heterogeneous neighborhoods and express less value in living among Jews; declining significance of Jewish friendships—increasing numbers of Jews state that their best friends are not Jewish; declining rates of philanthropic giving to Jewish causes; and declining degrees of emotional attachment to Israel. Indeed, they had less emotional attachment to Israel in 2001 than in 1990, despite the outbreak of the Second Intifada in October 2000, which, for a short while, appeared to intensify emotional attachments to Israel.[22] The most recent study available, Cohen and Kelman's 2007 national study of American Jews, contained a series of questions relating to feelings about Israel. Almost uniformly, the older cohorts feel more strongly positive about Israel than the younger ones. Those younger than age 35 score lowest on measures of attachment to Israel, caring about Israel, engagement with Israel, and support of Israel.[23]

In contrast, among the identified and affiliated segment of the population, there is a mirror image of these patterns, with an increase and intensification in almost all of the above areas. The affiliated group increasingly sends its children to day schools. Its college students are enrolling in large numbers in college classes with Jewish subjects being taught by the ever-growing number of professors of Jewish studies at major colleges and universities across the United States. Their activists crowd the annual AIPAC political conferences. This polarity is sharpened by the high interconnectedness and correlation between these various patterns. In general, there is consistency running throughout, that is, those who are high on one are high on most or all, and those who are low on one are low on most or all.

One manifestation of this increasing polarity is that the patterns of decline are taking place at the same time that the number of self-identified Jewish United States senators and members of the House of Representatives has increased; Jewish Studies in college and universities around the United States are booming; and it has become

quite "in" to be Jewish in the United States, achieving a near status symbol.

An increase and intensification of peoplehood identification was most recently expressed in the reaction of the American Jewish community to the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006. The organized community mobilized politically and economically, pressuring the American government and sending millions of dollars in aid to the war effort in Israel. One report put it this way,

> Dramatic developments, like katyusha rockets falling on northern Israel capture one's attention and present an opportunity for the provision of goods, services, and funds to help Israeli victims. By mid-August, the American Jewish Committee had received more than $1.5 million in donations and the American Friends of the Israel Defense Forces had raised more than $4.5 million. The United Jewish Communities' Israel Emergency Campaign received $310.8 million in donations. There was a similar push to support Israel when the Second Intifada started. The United Jewish Communities raised almost $360 million in donations to support Israel during the intifada, but it was over a longer period of time.[24]

Indeed, the amounts sent were unprecedented, and the organized American Jewish community expressed its dissatisfaction with the inefficiency of the Israeli government to respond to the needs of the war-torn northern part of the country.

In addition to the amount of money raised, one of the most significant aspects of the UJC Israel Emergency Campaign during the summer of 2006 was that it was supported by the three major American Jewish denominations: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. For several decades, there had been an increasing divide between the denominations, especially between the Orthodox on the one hand and Conservative and Reform on the other. It was, as Samuel Freedman described it, a situation of "Jew vs. Jew."[25] When it came to the war this past summer, however, all three movements supported the Israel

Emergency Campaign. As the UJC stated, "The Federation system and the synagogue movements, together, represent the largest Jewish constituent framework on the continent. They are breaking new ground in their determination to broaden the overall base of support for Israel by creating a united front through the Israel Emergency Campaign."[26]

For much of the summer, most Jews supported Israel, which they saw as the victim of a cruel act of patent aggression threatening its very survival. In part, the atypical unity of America's Jews in support of Israel was a reflection of the fact that most Americans overall supported Israel. Beyond that, the actions which America's Jews undertook at the beginning of the war, cited above, cannot be taken as an indication of a basic change with respect the nature of their Jewish identification, be it in terms of Israel or, more broadly, Jewish peoplehood. We saw a similar pattern in 1967, after the Six-Day War, but its effects were not long-lasting. They were similar to those of Americans after 9/11. It seems reasonable to assume that they intensified the ties of those who were part of the organized community but had little long-lasting impact on those who were not.

Some suggestions along these lines are in the Cohen and Kelman study. They found that 82 percent identify as "pro-Israel" but only 28 percent identify as "Zionists," and the figures are even lower among younger Jews.[27] More than 80 percent identifying as "pro-Israel" may sound high, but not unusually so in a country in which most of the population is pro-Israel. As a Gallup poll conducted in February 2007 reported, 63 percent of Americans favor Israel, and 55 percent consider it a "vital friend."[28] Likewise, in a poll conducted in October 2007, by the Anti-Defamation League, 65 percent of registered American voters stated that Israel can be counted on as a strong, reliable U.S. ally, and that, "in the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians" three times as many sympathize with Israel than with the Palestinians.[29]

The figures on pro-Israel and Zionist identification suggest that American Jews may be viewed as "diaspora transnationals" for whom the historic homeland is no longer viewed as "the center" and no longer has the affective power it once had. It is not even the "*alte heim*" which, according to Charles Liebman, it once was. In 1973, he

argued that Israel had importance for American Jews as a *heim*, the Yiddish word for "home," with all of the nostalgia that surrounds that concept.[30] In fact, the meaning of *heim* may be captured more accurately if it is translated "the old home." Building on Liebman's notion, I argued at the time that America's Jews perceived Israel more as a "home," what Christopher Lasch termed a "haven in a heartless world."[31] Israel was thus not subject to all of the same rules that apply to political entities, but rather to what may be termed "family rules." Just as the family does not always necessarily operate according to the rules of democratic procedure or in accordance with rational or legal-rational rules, being instead the place where "they'll always take you in," so did many American (and other) Jews relate to Israel as a non-political entity.[32] Israeli leaders, moreover, frequently reinforced this perception of Israel when they spoke, for example, of the obligations that diaspora Jewry has to Israel but not of the obligations which Israel has to diaspora Jewry. Clearly, all that has changed, and since the 1980s, increasing numbers of America's Jews no longer relate to Israel as the *heim* but as a political entity which is subject to the same, if not more, criticism than any other state. They are pro-Israel for much the same reasons that other Americans are.

Lastly, for now, increasing numbers of America's Jews reject normative judgments in religion and ethnicity. American Jews increasingly view efforts to promote endogamy, in-marriage, rather than exogamy, intermarriage, as ethnocentric, if not "racist."[33] In addition, even "moderately affiliated" American Jews no longer accept the notions of Jews as a "chosen people," or that there are any standards by which one can determine who is a "good Jew."

In the early 1970s, Charles Liebman argued that Reconstructionism, developed by Mordecai M. Kaplan, was actually the religion of the American Jewish masses, even if they did not realize it. Referring to the Reconstructionist Haggadah, the book read at the Passover Seder, Liebman found that, "Consistently with Kaplan's ideology, all references to Jews as a chosen people were excised."[34] Whereas, as Arnold Eisen has shown, American Jewish thinkers have reinterpreted the notion in various ways,[35] the Jewish masses have abandoned it altogether.

While America's Jews have increasingly abandoned the notion of "chosen people," they are increasingly "choosing Jews." As Sylvia Barack Fishman found in her study of contemporary Reform Judaism in America, the largest of the Jewish denominations, which comprises about 39 percent of affiliated American Jewish households, most Reform Jews reject the notion of obligation. She quotes one not atypical devoted layman as saying, "The word *obligated* is morally repulsive to me. Obligation has no place in Reform Judaism."[36]

Likewise with respect to the notion of a "good Jew." Whereas Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum used respondents' definitions of a "good Jew" as indicators of Jewish identity,[37] increasing numbers of contemporary American Jews refuse to be judgmental and reject the very notion of "good Jews." As Cohen and Eisen found in their study of moderately affiliated American Jews,

> Our subjects emphasize *personal meaning as the arbiter of their Jewish involvement*. Their Judaism is personalist, focused on the self and its fulfillment rather than directed outward to the group. It is voluntarist in the extreme: assuming the rightful freedom of each individual to make his or her own Jewish decisions. As a result, Judaism must be strictly nonjudgmental. Each person interacts with Judaism in ways that suit him or her. No one is capable of determining for others what constitutes a good Jew.[38]

If, as Anthony Smith avers, "historic culture-communities" have a "myth of ethnic election," which entails covenant with the deity or mission on behalf of the deity, and ethnic groups are thus "chosen peoples,"[39] it seems clear that increasing numbers of America's Jews are not part of the larger historic-cultural community of Jews.

It should be emphasized that the focus here is on the declining sense among America's Jews of their being part of a broader Jewish people. As a specifically American group, they surely do have characteristics which may justify classifying them as an ethnic group. For example, Paul Burstein amassed data indicating that Jews are much

more economically and educationally successful than other ethnic, racial, or religious groups in the United States.[40] He analyzes the attempts to explain this Jewish exceptionalism and finds none of the explanations satisfactory. Whatever the explanation, the reality of the phenomenon may provide some justification for labeling American Jews as an American ethnic group, but increasing numbers of them are "at home in America," and it is the only one which calls to them.

Even within America, however, their ethnicity increasingly appears to be what Herbert Gans termed "symbolic ethnicity," which "wears thin."[41] It is not linguistically significant—most American Jews are illiterate in Hebrew, Yiddish, and any other Jewish language—nor does it significantly influence friendships, mate selection, or neighborhood. They increasingly resemble other European ethnic groups in the United States, which, as Alba[42] and Huntington[43] both argue, are to one degree or another melting. And, as indicated, they are increasingly American and increasingly distant from Jews elsewhere.

## The Problems with Direct Giving

During recent decades there have been increased calls for direct giving. Rather than give philanthropy to a centralized community chest, a Federation community fundraising campaign, individuals give directly to specific recipient agencies and/or individuals. There are clearly a number of advantages to direct giving, especially in providing the donor with a sense of empowerment and connection with the recipient agency or individual. Donors can cater their donations to causes which need it most and/or most reflect their personal values. By giving directly, the donors feel more attached to the recipient. Many Jews say they do not contribute to the Federation campaign because it is impersonal and alienating.[44] The more they feel attached to the recipient, the more they will give and the more likely that they will become actively involved on behalf of the recipient agency or individual. In fact, this form of philanthropy has had major impact. To cite but one example, a Toronto couple's matching-grant effort helped raise $8 million for cash-strapped Jewish elementary day schools in that city."[45] Developments such as these were among the rationales be-

hind the "Giving Wisely" effort and they present strong arguments to support the notion of "direct giving as a norm."[46]

Nevertheless, despite its advantages, I argue, especially in light of the overall patterns of Jewish philanthropic behavior, that the value of centralized communal giving rather than direct giving should be emphasized. My argument is directed particularly to the Orthodox community and is based on halakhic, social, and philosophical reasons.

To begin with, there are halakhic bases to the notions of forcible charity and communal fundraising. Rabbi Meir Hacohen, a prominent student of Rabbi Meir (the Maharam) of Rothenberg (1215–1293) and author of the *Teshuvot Maimoniot*, asserts that where it is customary for everyone to contribute together, or if it is a new community and there is no custom otherwise, the community can force individuals to contribute to various communal functions, including charity.[47] He also suggests that if a person has a relative who is needy, he is not permitted to give charity to his relative alone. He must give charity to those charged with managing the city's community chest, and they should distribute the funds appropriately to each needy individual.[48] It may be argued that because a high percentage of America's Jews do not contribute to any Jewish Federation campaign, it is not so clear that such campaigns can truly be called central communal fundraising campaigns in the sense that would commit everyone even involuntarily. On the other hand, there are numerous religious requirements that remain in effect even if they are not observed by a majority.

Even if Federation campaigns do not have the halakhic status of communal fundraising campaigns, there are social reasons for not encouraging direct giving. Although some of the promoters of direct giving assert that it should not take place at the expense of, or as a substitute for, communal giving,[49] there can be no question that it does. In fact, that is the very argument of those who assert that the decline of UJA-Federation funds to Israel does not reflect a decline in connections to Israel; they argue that American Jews continue to contribute to Israel but now do so via direct giving rather than through large central communal campaigns.[50] However, as the evidence cited above indicates, there has been an overall decline in the percentage of

American Jews who contribute to Jewish causes, whether via central communal campaigns or through direct giving. One of my concerns is that an increased emphasis on direct giving among Orthodox Jews may result in a similar decline in overall giving among them as well. Although some will surely continue to give and perhaps even increase their contributions, others, who will no longer be under community control, may no longer feel compelled to give, either as much or at all.

Much more probable is that an increased emphasis on direct giving will lead to even greater separation between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox segments of the community. During the last quarter of the twentieth century American Orthodox Jewry took a distinctly inward turn. Across the board, there was decreasing cooperation with the Conservative and Reform branches of American Judaism. These tendencies advanced to the point where a journalist who is a keen observer of the American Jewish scene perceived the existence of a *kulturkampf* in American Judaism, with the Orthodox versus the non-Orthodox engaged in a "struggle for the soul of American Judaism."[51] The communal campaigns have become almost the last arena in which there is intercommunal cooperation, and even there, there has been a declining Orthodox presence, so much so that pleasant surprise was expressed at the fact that there was intercommunal communal cooperation during the emergency campaign of the Second Lebanon War.[52] My concern is that increased emphasis on direct giving will remove even this last vestige of intercommunal-communal cooperation. This may not be a detriment for the "Haredi" component of American Orthodoxy, which has long opposed all formal intercommunal cooperation, but it should be one for the Modern Orthodox, Centrists, and others who are committed to the oneness of Jewry and the Jewish community.

In his analysis of charity, the sociologist Georg Simmel focused on the relationship between the recipients, who for him were the poor, and the donors, the non-poor.[53] In a somewhat different approach, in his analysis of face-to-face charity, Samuel Heilman looks at the relationship between the recipient and the community. He suggests that, "the relationship between the schnorrer and donors can be understood as having certain latent qualities of an exchange relationship. In

return for money, the schnorrers . . . attest to the presence, stability, and importance of the . . . community."[54] I suggest also looking at the relationship between the individual donor and the community, and I argue that, much more than face-to-face giving, communal campaigns have the effect not only of legitimizing the community, but also of tying the individual to the community, a principle which is basic according to traditional Jewish social thinkers.

To begin with, although Max Weber viewed rationalized charity as antithetical to religiously motivated charity,[55] Judaism takes a very different approach. As Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav, explained,

> The term "*zedaka*" [*sic*] is not properly understood. We generally interpret *zedaka* in the sense of doing a favor for someone. This interpretation is apparently correct, in that we don't owe the poor person anything. Thus, what we give is in the category of generosity which the poor person has no right to demand from us. But the Rambam has already shown, in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, Part 3, Ch. 53, that this conception is incorrect. If the Torah thus considered the matter of *zedaka*, it would have termed it *hesed*, because it is an act which the other cannot demand from us. If the Torah calls it *zedaka*—a term which is identified with "justice"—this is a clear indication that he is not doing any favor for the poor person. This is an act of justice. Doing justice is an obligation, not benevolence. And indeed the Halakha is thus determined.[56]

Although the recipient has no claim to tzedakah, the donor is expected to cultivate emotions which far transcend mere legal obligation. He is expected to internalize kindness and compassion to the point that they become compulsive. As the Rav wrote,

> The prayer community, it is self-evident, must at the same time be a charity-community, as well. It is not enough to feel the pain of many, nor is it sufficient to pray for the

> many, if this does not lead to charitable action. Hence, *Knesset Israel* is not only a prayerful community but a charitable community, too. We give, we pray for all because we are sensitive to pain; we try to help the many. We Jews have developed a singular sensitivity to pain which is characteristic of the Jew. The terms for it—*rachmanut*—is a Hebrew word, most commonly used as a Yiddish colloquialism derived from the Hebrew *rachem, rachaman.*
>
> What is the semantics of *rachaman*, in contrast with that of *merachem*? *Merachem* denotes an activity; it tells us one thing, namely, that a particular person acts with mercy; the word does not reveal to us what motivates those acts. *Rachaman*, in contradistinction with *merachem*, tells us, not only that a person acts with kindness, but that he is himself, by his very nature, kind. The *rachaman* commiserates, as if he had no choice in the matter; he is kind because his kindness is compulsive. *Rachmanut* describes kindness as a trait of personality. *Rachmanut*, then, signifies utter sensitivity to pain, and describes beautifully the specific, unique relationship of a Jew to suffering.[57]

For the Rav, Judaism espouses neither individualism nor collectivism in the traditional modes. The individual is neither "an independent free entity, who gives up basic aspects of his sovereignty in order to live within a communal framework," nor is he "born into community which, in turn, invests him with certain rights." Rather, individuals create community by realizing their individual need for others. As the Rav subsequently elaborated, the individual Jew must recognize the other as irreplaceable and must always be cognizant of his moral obligation toward his fellow Jew. Each Jew is responsible for the actions of the others, for better or worse. Each individual Jew has collective responsibility.[58] Thus, much as the Rav emphasized individuality and aloneness, he also emphasized the need for community.[59] In his delineation of the parameters of interaction between Orthodox and non-Orthodox rabbis, he emphasized that "unity in Israel is a ba-

sic principle in Judaism," and that cooperation other than on "eternal problems" is to be encouraged.[60]

For better or worse, Federations are the most encompassing representations of American Jewish communities individually and of the American Jewish community as whole. Particularly at this time, the national body, reorganized as the United Jewish Communities in 1990, is undergoing severe challenges.[61] It would therefore be an especially propitious time for the Orthodox to become much more involved, as professionals, and laity, and, on a larger scale, by contributing to the campaigns. An emphasis on direct giving may widen the gap between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox in American Jewry.

The type of direct giving which has been referred to until now is that which operates completely independently. However, there are, in fact, two very different types of direct giving. The second is that which functions within the Federation context. Indeed, United Jewish Communities today *encourages* personalized, direct giving through Federations. It also fosters venture philanthropy by enabling those philanthropists who want to have a say in where and how their money is used to fund causes to which they are committed and to be active in those causes. Indeed, partnering between direct givers and Federation is now a significant part of Jewish communal philanthropy activity.[62]

## Caution with Mega-Giving

Related, but not identical, to the issue of direct giving is that of the impact of mega-givers. They surely can "work miracles," do amazing and important feats, as in the case of Henry and Julia Koschitzky, who donated the $4 million matching grant to the day schools of Toronto, cited above.[63] However, the question that needs to be explored is what latent impact such mega-gifts have on institutions. In Yiddish, Hebrew, English, and other languages, there is an expression to the effect that "Money talks."[64] This was a widely prevalent phenomenon in the American Jewish community during the 1920s–1950s and was a source of considerable criticism in the community because of the feeling that Jewishly ignorant people were the powerful leaders of the Jewish organizational structure.[65] They were what the psychologist

Kurt Lewin termed "leaders from the periphery."[66] Much of that was overcome in the 1960s and 1970s, and Jewish leadership became more Jewishly knowledgeable. If mega-giving were to become more established, we may find a reversion to the situation in which they have the power to determine the course of the institution or agency to which they give, and their values, views, and objectives may be very different from those of the institution and agency of which they take control.[67]

Finally, we need to explore the impact of mega-givers on the involvement patterns of the community. The evidence presented above indicates that Orthodox giving has not followed the patterns of the non-Orthodox and continues to be prevalent. However, what will happen when mega-givers take over the funding needs? Will the Orthodox community continue to give, or will there develop a sense that the needs are being sufficiently cared for by the mega-givers and the rest of the community can sit back and not be concerned with communal needs, especially because they will have decreasing say in policies and direction? Will the mega-givers reflect the interests of the entire community, or will they use their resources to try and transform the community and its sense of itself to meet their needs and values? We do not yet have sufficient empirical evidence to be able to take any definitive positions on this issue, and we need to approach it with caution. The experience of nineteenth-century European Jewish philanthropy suggests that the mega-givers, working together with Jewish communal professionals, have the power to transform not only the shape of Jewish philanthropy but the collective Jewish identity as well.[68] Independent direct giving by mega-givers may well transform Jewish philanthropy as we have known it for the past century and may also contribute to the further decline of Jewish communal identity. Their activities represent and contribute to individualization and the primacy of "the sovereign self,"[69] and would not bode well for the traditional Jewish conception of the relationship between the individual and the community.

## NOTES

1. Daniel J. Elazar, *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1976), p. 160.
2. Chaim I. Waxman, *The Stigma of Poverty: A Critique of Poverty Theories and Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), pp. 83–87.
3. James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 118.
4. Charles S. Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1973).
5. Allon Gal, "Diaspora's Liberal Nationalism and the Call of the Homeland: the American Jewish Case," paper presented at the conference "The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present," University College, London, June 19, 2007.
6. Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism: From Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1975), pp. 325–326.
7. Harry L. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed: The Jewish Federation Movement in America* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961), pp. 136–143.
8. Naomi W. Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (New York: Ktav, 1975) pp. 138–139.
9. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "$100,000,000 in Five Days," in Marc Lee Raphael, *Understanding Jewish Philanthropy* (New York: Ktav, 1979), p. 89.
10. Steven T. Rosenthal, *Irreconcilable Differences: The Waning of the American Jewish Love Affair with Israel* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2001), pp. xvii–xxi.
11. For more on this, see Sergio DellaPergola, Uzi Rebhun, and Rosa Perla Raichler, "The Six-Day War and Israel-Diaspora Relations: An Analysis of Quantitative Indicators," in Eli Lederhendler (ed.), *The Six-Day War and World Jewry* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2000), pp. 11–50.
12. It should be noted that the Jewish Agency was not alone in receiving Diaspora funds and working in Israel. For example, the American Joint Distribution Committee is active in Jewish communities around the world, including Israel, where it has a broad variety of programs.
13. Eliezer D. Jaffe, *Giving Wisely: The Israel Guide to Volunteer and Nonprofit Social Services* (Jerusalem: Koren, 1982); also see the Giving Wisely website, www.givingwisely.org.il.
14. Jack Wertheimer, "Current Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy," in David Singer and Ruth R. Seldin (eds.), *American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 97. (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1997), pp. 3–92.
15. Gary A. Tobin, Jeffrey R. Solomon, and Alexander C. Karp, "Mega-Gifts in American Philanthropy: General & Jewish Giving Patterns Between 1995–2000" (San Francisco: Institute for Jewish and Community Research, 2003), p. 38; Gary A. Tobin, "The Transition of Communal Values and Behavior in Jewish Philanthropy" (San Francisco: Institute for Jewish and Community Research, 2001), p. 6.

16. Ukeles Associates, "The 2002 Greater Phoenix Jewish Community Study: Summary" (Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix, December 2002), p. 15.
17. Gary A. Tobin, "Jewish Philanthropy in American Society," in Dwight F. Burlingame (ed.), *Philanthropy in America: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), vol. 2, p. 285.
18. Data set obtained from the Association of Religion Data Archives.
19. Robert D. Putnam: *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
20. Robert Putnam, "A Better Society in a Time of War," *New York Times* (October 19, 2001), p. A19.
21. Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and Matthew E. Brashears, "Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades," *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 3 (June 2006), pp. 353–375.
22. The 1990 data already showed that younger American Jews had weaker bonds with Jews elsewhere, including Israel. See Chaim I. Waxman, *Jewish Baby Boomers: A Communal Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). For the 2000–2001 data viewed denominationally, see Chaim I. Waxman, "Israel as But One Component of American Jewish Identity," paper delivered at the International Conference on Education, Community and Norms, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, December 29, 2004; idem, "The Enduring Significance of Denomination" [Hebrew], *Gesher: Journal of Jewish Affairs* 50, no. 150 (Winter 2004), pp. 24–31.
23. Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, "Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel," Jewish Identity Project of Reboot and Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, 2007, pp. 8–11.
24. *Jewish People Policy Planning Institute Annual Assessment 2007: Executive Report No. 4—Societal Aspects* (Jerusalem: Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, 2007), p. 23.
25. Samuel G. Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
26. *Jewish People Policy Planning Institute Annual Assessment 2007*, p. 23.
27. Cohen and Kelman, "Beyond Distancing," p. 27.
28. Gallup News Service, Gallup Poll Briefing, February 21, 2007, pp. 2, 5.
29. Anti-Defamation League, "American Attitudes Towards Israel, the Palestinians. and Prospects for Peace in the Middle East: An Anti-Defamation League Survey," October 2007, pp. 5–6.
30. Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew*, p. 106.
31. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
32. Chaim I. Waxman, "Religion and State in Israel: The Perspective of American Jewry," in Eliezer Don-Yehiya (ed.), *State and Diaspora: The State of Israel and Jewish Diaspora—Ideological and Political Perspectives* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), pp. 97–107.

33. See, for example, the debate between Joey Kurzman, a senior editor of a Jewish blogspot, "jewcy" (http://www.jewcy.com/dialogue) and Jack Wertheimer, the provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in which Kurzman unabashedly proclaims "The End of the Jewish People, Judaism must prepare itself for a world after peoplehood" and "The Ethnocentric Cult Is Finished, Cries of 'We are one' will go nowhere in today's America."
34. Charles S. Liebman, *Aspects of the Religious Behavior of American Jews* (New York: Ktav, 1974) p. 201.
35. Arnold M. Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study in Jewish Religious Ideology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
36. Sylvia Barack Fishman, "Growth and Challenges in the Contemporary Reform Movement," paper delivered at the International Conference on Contemporary Reform Judaism: Sociology, Education and Theology, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, December 24, 2007, p. 32 [emphasis in original].
37. Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier: A Study of Group Survival in the Open Society,* 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 321–332.
38. Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, "The Sovereign Self: Jewish Identity in Post-Modern America," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, no. 453 (8 Iyar 5761/May 1, 2001). For a broader and deeper analysis of the "sovereign self," see their book, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 13–42.
39. Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 48–49.
40. "Jewish Educational and Economic Success in the United States: A Search for Explanations," *Sociological Perspectives* 50, no. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 209–228.
41. Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no. 4 (October 1994), pp. 577–592.
42. Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
43. Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 178–192.
44. Their contentions about the impersonal character of federated charity are reminiscent of the sociologist Max Weber's contentions about charity in Puritan New England, namely, that they were cold and calculating, "a rationalized enterprise [whose] religious significance was eliminated and even transformed into the opposite significance." Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 589.
45. http://www.ijn.com/archive/2007%20arch/122107.htm.
46. http://www.givingwisely.org.il/Intro2.htm.
47. *Hilkhot Maimoniot, Kinyan* 29.
48. *Hilkhot Maimoniot, Kinyan* 27.

49. Eliezer Jaffe stresses, "The publication of *Giving Wisely* is not intended to downplay the importance of the UJA-Federation Appeal (now the 'United Jewish Communities') or its European counterpart, Keren Hayesod," and proceeds to enumerate some of the important features of those campaigns. http://www.givingwisely.org/Intro2.htm.
50. Jack Wertheimer suggested that the sum given to Israel through hundreds of "friends of" organizations is about the size of the allocations from Federation campaigns to the UJA, and that may not include direct contributions to Israeli yeshivas and political parties. See Wertheimer, "Current Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy," pp. 36–40.
51. Samuel G. Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
52. This was why it was it was so remarkable that there was cooperation between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform in the emergency campaign sparked by the Second Lebanon War. See above, n. 24.
53. Georg Simmel, "The Poor," in Chaim I. Waxman (ed.), *Poverty: Power and Politics* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968), pp. 3–36.
54. Samuel C. Heilman, "The Gift of Alms: Face-to-Face Almsgiving Among Orthodox Jews," *Urban Life and Culture* 3, no. 4 (January 1975), p. 382.
55. See n. 44 above.
56. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Yemei Zikaron* (Jerusalem: Sifriyat Elinor of the World Zionist Organization, Department of Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, 1986), p. 43.
57. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Community," *Tradition* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1978), p. 22. The transliterated terms appeared in Hebrew in the original.
58. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Ha-adam Be'olamo* (Jerusalem: Sifriyat Elinor of the World Zionist Organization, Department of Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, 5758 [1998]), pp. 70–73.
59. For a somewhat different approach to the importance of individuality as well as the need to be part of the community, see Rabbi Yehuda Amital, *Vehaaretz Natan Livnei Adam* (Alon Shvut: Tevunot, 5765 [2005]), translated into English by David Strauss as *Jewish Values in a Changing World* (Jersey City, N.J.: Ktav, 2005).
60. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*, ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (Jersey City, N.J.: Ktav and Toras HoRav Foundation, 2005), pp. 143–149.
61. In October 2009, UJC was renamed "The Jewish Federations of North America." For an analysis of United Jewish Communities, see Gerald B. Bubis and Steven Windmueller, *From Predictability to Chaos? How Jewish Leaders Reinvented Their National Communal System* (Jerusalem: Center for Jewish Community Studies, 2005).
62. I thank Yossi Prager for pointing this out in his presentations at the Orthodox Forum, New York City, March 27–28, 2008, and to Jack Ukeles, who made a similar point in his comments on my paper.

63. See n. 45 above.
64. In Yiddish, the expression is "*Der vos hot meah hot di deah*"; in Hebrew, similarly, "*Mi sheyesh lo hameah, yesh lo hadeah.*"
65. Chaim I. Waxman, *America's Jews in Transition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), pp. 74–79.
66. Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper & Row, 1948), pp. 195–196.
67. Such developments are probably not currently the norm, but I can think of at least one case in which the mega-giver has thus "taken over."
68. Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
69. Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).